

Culture and Community

Researching HIV and gay and lesbian lives in Australia, 1990-2005

Volume One

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**A submission in three volumes in fulfilment of requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy by Publication**

**University of Technology, Sydney
June 2005**

CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORSHIP/ORIGINALITY

I certify that the work in this thesis has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree except as fully acknowledged within the text.

I also certify that the thesis has been written by me. Any help that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

Signature of Candidate

M. Hurley

Acknowledgements

The thirteen pieces of work submitted here for examination as a Doctorate in Philosophy by Publication were written over a fifteen year period, 1990-2005. They have involved several research projects and many informants. I thank the authors, editors, publishers, critics and readers who contributed to my work on gay and lesbian writing in Australia. I thank and acknowledge the many people living with HIV and AIDS in Australia who answered my questions and made me understand their points of view. I learned much from the HIV educators and managers with whom I worked closely at various times, especially Ross Duffin, Alan Brotherton, Jo Watson as well as staff of the Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations, the National Association of People Living with HIV and AIDS, the AIDS Council of NSW and other state and territory AIDS Councils. I thank Levinia Crooks of the Australasian Society for HIV Medicine. I particularly acknowledge my time in the joint Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations (AFAO) and the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society (ARCSHS) Researcher in Residence Project based at AFAO, 1999-2000.

That project and some of the work submitted for this degree were funded by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing, ARCSHS and AFAO.

During the time I wrote these pieces I was employed firstly in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Technology, Sydney, 1985-1998, and later as a Senior Research Fellow at the Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University, Melbourne 2001-. Both organisations have supported my work for which I am very grateful. I particularly acknowledge the support of the Director of ARCSHS, Dr Marian Pitts, and Deputy Director, Dr Gary Dowsett, and the assistance of Ms Samantha Croy.

Students at both universities have been constant sources of intellectual revitalisation.

The Faculty of Education at UTS made my candidacy for a PhD by Publication possible. I thank particularly my supervisors, Dr Nicky Solomon, from Education, and Professor Andrew Jakubowicz of Humanities and Social Sciences. They kept me focussed, guided, suggested, did their job. I am grateful. Ms Pat Skinner at the Graduate School, UTS, made the process very smooth.

I acknowledge the work of my colleagues in HIV social research and its effects on my thinking.

Like anyone who engages in a process both long term and immediate, I relied on friends. I acknowledge the contributions to my thinking, the inspiration and the assorted kindnesses of Mitch Cleary, Rose Flynn, Jan McKemmish, Moira Carmody, Virginia Heywood, Lynne Hillier, Liz Jacka, Craig Johnston, Kevin Mead, Chrissie Miles, Lesley Podesta, Garrett Prestage, Leigh Raymond, Dermot Ryan, Graham Willett and Jon Willis.

To Marc Clancy I owe much more than I understand.

I put your body
between me
and the history of horrors

(Porter 1996: 63)

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Site One: Gay and lesbian writing and publishing in Australia

- (1990) 'Homosexualities: fiction, reading and moral training', in Threadgold, T., and Cranny-Francis, A. (eds) *Feminine, Masculine and Representation*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney: 154-170.
- (1992) 'Writing: the body positive', in *Pink Ink. An anthology of Australian lesbian and gay writers*, Wicked Women Publications, Sydney: 12-42. Edited version published in *Meanjin*, 1992, 51(1): 199-219.
- (1996) *A Guide to Gay and Lesbian Writing in Australia*, Allen & Unwin and the Australian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Sydney.
- (2002) 'A Critical Reflection', in Aitken, G. (ed) *The Penguin Book of Australian Gay Writing*, Penguin, Melbourne: 396-410.

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Site Two: HIV social research

- (1992) 'AIDS Narratives, Gay Sex and the Hygienics of Innocence', *Southern Review*, July, 25(2): 141-159.
- (2000) *A Report on the Work of Members of the Treatments Officers Network from an Educational Perspective*, Working Paper 2, Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University, Melbourne.
- (2001) *Strategic and Conceptual Issues for Community-Based HIV/AIDS Treatments Media*, Working Paper 3, Monograph Series Number 20, Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University, Melbourne.
- (2002) 'Imagine Hope: AIDS and gay identity', *AIDS Care* 14(1): 138-141.
- (2002) 'Introduction' and 'Cultures of Care', in Hurley, M. (ed) *Cultures of Care and Safe Sex Amongst HIV Positive Australians. Papers from the HIV Futures I and II surveys and interviews*, Monograph Series Number 43, Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University, Melbourne: 9-14, 31-38.
- (2003) *Then and Now. Gay men and HIV*, Monograph Series Number 46, Australian Research Centre in Sex, Health and Society, La Trobe University, Melbourne.

VOLUME THREE

Site Three: Media, commodity cultures and the narration of gay and lesbian lives

- (1999) 'The Love That Loves to Speak its Name', *Social Semiotics* 9(2): 271-283.
- (2001) 'Sydney', in Johnston, C. and van Ryke, P. (eds) *Queer City. Gay and lesbian politics in Sydney*, Pluto Press, Sydney: 241-257.
- (2005) 'Contemporary Gay Cultures', in Hawkes, G. and Scott, J. (eds) *Perspectives in Human Sexuality*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne: 41-60.

Abstract

This thesis presents an essay and thirteen items published between 1990 and 2005 in support of my candidature for a Doctorate in Philosophy by Publication. The items presented range across several forms: books (1), book chapters (5), refereed journal essays (3), and research reports and report chapters (4).

The items analyse various articulations of culture and community in relation to contemporary gay and, to a lesser extent, lesbian life in Australia. They are organised into three sites. The work in Site One establishes gay and lesbian writing in Australia as a scholarly field. In Site Two, the work investigates Australian responses to HIV, how the epidemic affects gay cultures and relations between 'community' responses to HIV and those cultures. Site Three begins a systematic consideration of the relations between media, representation and commodification and how these effect change in the social narration of gay and lesbian lives.

The accompanying essay provides an overview of the presented work that argues for its contemporary relevance and original contribution to knowledge. The essay explores the ways culture and community are articulated on each of the sites. It argues that community is both a specific socio-cultural form and a mode of governmentality. It investigates these articulations in relation to everyday life and explores the resultant tensions and ambiguities, their connections and disconnections.

Preamble

This submission consists of an essay and thirteen published items selected and presented in support of my candidature for a Doctorate in Philosophy by Publication. The items presented for examination are organised in three volumes, as indicated in the Table of Contents. For purposes of submission, the items are grouped into three sites of investigation. Volume One includes an essay and the first group of published items. Volumes Two and Three include the remaining items grouped as Sites Two and Three.

The 13 items were published between 1990 and 2005. They address various aspects of culture and community in relation to contemporary gay and, to a lesser extent, lesbian life in Australia.¹ The items were not written as a conventionally unified thesis for Doctoral examination, and this submission ('the PhD') has, accordingly, a form of its own. The essay accompanying the publications consists of an Introduction, Overview, Background, Methodology, a discussion of the three sites and a Conclusion.

The aim of the essay is to show, *as required*, how the work has developed, its contemporary relevance, and the ways it makes an 'original and scholarly contribution to knowledge' in 'a thematic overview which serves to link the individual publications into an integrated whole'. The work presented ranges across several forms: books (1), book chapters (5), refereed journal essays (3), and research reports and report chapters (4).

For the purposes of presenting the work here, the thirteen publications have been organised into three sites of investigation: first, gay and lesbian writing and publishing in Australia; second, HIV social research into the relations between the HIV epidemic, HIV

¹ I use 'gay' and lesbian' here as inclusive, descriptive terms to cover all forms of same sex desire without any automatic assumption of an accompanying identity politics. I avoid identity proliferations such as GLBTI (gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, intersexed) and research categories such as MSM (men who have sex with men), though I accept that sometimes people who identify as heterosexual also sometimes engage in same sex behaviour or might want to do so, just as some people who identify as homosexuals engage in opposite sex attractions and behaviours (Smith *et al.* 2003). However, there are times when gay men and lesbians are much more strongly identifiable as constituting 'lived cultures' and 'communities', not only but often in relation to identity, forms of association, sexual practices, ritual social events and to the state.

education and people living with HIV and AIDS and gay men. In the process of my work in these two sites, especially on their interactions with the ‘doing’ of gay, a third site emerged: the wider socio-cultural shifts that change the forms in which gay lives and desires are narrated and regulated in contemporary commodity cultures.

I note that my *Curriculum Vitae* includes a body of publications and peer reviewed international and national conference presentations that is significantly larger than the items presented here. The work put forward is a selection. Where I refer to work from my *CV* that is not submitted here I do so in the ordinary way, for example, (Hurley 2000), and include it in the references. Where I cite work written by me and submitted here I do so by its title only, for example, (‘Contemporary gay cultures’). The Curriculum Vitae was presented separately as part of the application process for admission to candidature for the degree. The application for admission to candidature was supported by two referees familiar with my work overall: Associate Professor Gary Dowsett, then at the Mailman School of Public Health, Columbia University, New York, and Professor Terry Goldie, Department of English, York University, Toronto, Canada.

The work presented progressively articulates and re-articulates the ‘different, distinct elements’ that continuously make and change relations between community and culture (Hall 1986). Where necessary for that articulation I bring in a third term, governmentality, in order to understand better what is occurring when cultural forms narrate and produce socialities. In that way, culture and community are articulated in relation to the detail of what has been learned in the research. This enables identification of ‘relations between forms of communication and forms of social life’ (Grossberg 1997: 144). The contextual details of the discussions are Australian, but the preoccupations are often those of both Cultural Studies internationally (Lewis 2004; Morris 1984) and the global challenge of HIV. These general preoccupations are mediated in each site by specific considerations.

The works presented in Site One established the scholarly field of gay and lesbian writing in Australian literary and cultural studies. They did so in ways that took into account how

the field was understood by practitioners in the relevant writing and publishing formations, but the research was not delimited by those understandings. The works presented in Site Two identified ongoing challenges posed by everyday cultures for HIV social research and HIV education. The works presented in Site Three described and analysed shifts in the socio-cultural structures affecting the making of gay lives.

I also want to say along with Michel Foucault, Rosalind Coward, Stephen Heath, and no doubt many others, that the twentieth century is the century in which we, the citizens of western capitalism, speak ourselves and are spoken of sexually. In a grand narrative of personal development through bodily mobilisation, romantic fantasy, sexual awareness and orgasmic fulfilment. By novels, by women's and men's magazines, through newspapers, through advertising, through agony columns, popular music, personal columns, through literature courses, through self help therapies, through 'How to' manuals, through sex education, through films, through soap opera, through gossip and self regulation. Through writing. Narratives in which personal life is sexualised. The century of identity. The century of maturity, health and normalcy. The century of deviance, perversion, inversion and illness. The century of homosexuality, of camp, of resistance, of gayness, of lesbianism.

Like them I want to say no to all this, but the first voice I hear is that of Blanche in *The Golden Girls*: 'how can I say no to the man I love when I can't say no to the men I like?'

(Hurley 1991: 27)